

By **STUART EARP** Wycombe Wanderers 1, Gateshead 1

WYCOMBE Wanderers were held to a 1-1 draw in their last match of the season on Friday evening when they entertained tough Northern Premier League club Gateshead at Loakes Park.

For a friendly at this stage of the season Friday's game was extremely hard with no quarter given by the men from the North. Referee John Martin had to keep a firm grip on the game as Gateshead resorted to some rather unnecessary physical tactics.

Left back Ray Ellison showed a particular liking for Ian Pearson's shins while Keith Mead and Steve Carney indulged in a minor bout of fisticuffs towards the end of the game. Fortunately there were no injuries.

The Blues' final match of the season marked Howard Kettleborough's last game for the club. 'Kets', who has served Wycombe well this year, was made skipper for the night but before the game got underway, a minute's silence was observed in remembrance of Tony Aveyard, the Scarborough winger who died after a head injury sustained in the Northern Premier League match on Monday. Only two

days earlier, Aveyard had helped Scarborough win the F.A. Trophy.

Wanderers included Glen Darnell, a centre half from Southern League Oswestry and had Bob Davies, Ian Pearson and Mick Holifield back in the side after their recent trips abroad.

Gateshead were impressive early on, playing some accurate passes around and looking the more positive side. The Northerners deserved the lead after 35 minutes. Wycombe were slow to clear potential danger inside their penalty area and Steve Carney took advantage to send in an awkward shot. John Maskell was beaten by the bounce and could only palm the ball out to Ian Hopkinson who hooked his shot home.

Steve Hill twice sent good chances over the top as Wanderers replied but they made it 1-1 with a scrambled goal in the 44th minute. Holifield's corner curled viciously in the wind and goalkeeper Dave Clark could only palm the ball onto the crossbar. Pearson was there to

get a touch to the ball and although Gateshead cleared, referee Martin signalled that the ball had crossed the line. Wycombe might have gone ahead in first half injury time when Pearson sent Paul Birdseye racing through but Clark parried the full back's shot and then saved Hill's follow up.

Gateshead had the better of the second half but their physical tactics brought many free kicks for Wycombe, one of which Tony Horseman curled just under the crossbar, forcing Clark to make a fine save. Kettleborough almost scored in his last game when he headed well but saw his header cleared off the line.

WYCOMBE: J. Maskell; P. Birdseye, K. Mead, G. Darnell, R. Davies; W. Roberts, J. Priestley, M. Holifield; I. Pearson, H. Kettleborough, S. Hill (sub A. Horseman 73 mins). Sub G. Anthony (not used).

GATESHEAD: D. Clark; F. McIver, R. Ellison, J. Rosethorn, C. Gott, R. Carney, G. Elliott (sub I. Rosethorn 73 mins), I. Hopkinson, S. Carney, L. Mutrie, A. Baker.

Referee: J. Martin (Hants).

Half-time: 1-1. **Goalscorers:** Wycombe — Pearson (44), Gateshead: S. Carney (35).